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OECD/INES/NETWORK A

REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Issue 7 *Autumn 1997*

In This Issue

In its feature article, this Autumn's newsletter explores authentic assessment, a topic which is of growing interest and growing prevalence in many countries. First, we examine the existence of authentic assessment in Network A countries and the different terminology used to describe such assessment. Where possible, we describe the methods that countries use to assess their students authentically and the rationale for using this, or other, more traditional, assessment methods. This edition's *Country Highlights* is presented in French and describes the role of the National Ministry of Education in France's assessment system.

This issue also provides an update on two new assessment projects in Luxembourg, which were highlighted briefly in last Spring's newsletter; updates on the activities of several of the INES Project Networks; and a brief review of assessment activities occurring in member countries between July and December 1997.

Thank you, as always, to all of the Network A members and correspondents who contributed to the newsletter. Special thanks to Jean-Paul Reeff for elaborating upon two new assessment projects in Luxembourg; to Jacqueline Levasseur for preparing the newsletter's first article written in French and for providing information on the assessment system in France; and to the Network Chairs for providing updates from around the INES Project.

Authentic Assessment

In literature, authentic assessment often is described as having the following defining characteristics: it requires the student to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list; it addresses "worthy" intellectual tasks or "real-world" problems or issues; and it often is standards- rather than norm-referenced. As several of our respondents pointed out, the term authentic refers to both the content *and* process of assessment-the materials (e.g., texts) and activities (e.g., multiple, integrated) are "real" and resemble tasks faced by students in work and in life. Authentic assessment is favored by some countries because it is viewed as a way to obtain more comprehensive or more meaningful information about student performance. Authentic assessment also is growing in some countries because it is seen as one of the education system's answers to pressure from business and industry to produce students who are oriented to the types of tasks they will be asked to perform in the world of work. However, authentic assessment, because of more labor intensive evaluation and scoring procedures, also is more expensive and time-consuming than more traditional methods of assessment; and there are some who question its validity in comparison to traditional, presumably more objective, methods of testing. Further research and the experience of those who are testing such new assessments will inform these questions as time progresses.

We asked you to tell us if the term authentic assessment exists in your country, and if such assessments are used, why they are used and how they are performed. Six of 14 countries responded that the term and the practice of authentic assessment exist, although terms such as performance assessment and functional skills assessment are found as well. An additional three countries, however, indicated that they used assessments that were similar to the definition given in terms of their characteristics, although the term authentic assessment was not used. Among those countries who use authentic assessment, the targeted grade levels and subject areas-with the exception of mathematics, which is popularly tested with authentic assessment-varied widely across countries. Table 1 provides a brief overview of countries' responses regarding the existence of authentic assessment in their countries.

TABLE 1
Authentic Assessment in Network A Countries

Country	Uses "authentic" (or similar term)	Uses this type of assessment
Austria	No	No
Belgium (French)	Yes (Functional skills)	Yes
Canada	Yes	Yes
Czech Republic	--	No
Denmark	--	No
England	No	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes
France	No	Yes
New Zealand	Yes (Performance Assessment)	Yes
Spain	No	No
Sweden	Yes (Autentiska uppgifter)	Yes
Switzerland	--	No
Turkey	No	No
United States	Yes	Yes

Who Uses Authentic Assessment and How Is It Described?

Most countries responded that they do use authentic assessment, although the terminology and the governmental level at which such assessments are implemented varied widely across countries. For instance, Belgium (French), Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, and United States all stated explicitly that they used authentic assessment to evaluate student performance and offered the following brief descriptions of how this type of assessment is defined and utilized.

- In **Belgium (French)**, national assessments at the primary and secondary levels test students' "functional skills" in reading and mathematics. The exercises or questions used to assess students are considered authentic in both content and process: the items are designed to be similar to real-life tasks and meaningful to the student, and the tests are designed with questions requiring that students perform multiple tasks (e.g., reading instructions, comparing documents, finding sources of information, performing numeric operations) to arrive at an answer.
- Authentic assessment is used throughout **Canada** to assess student performance, however with considerable ambiguity about the meaning of the term. Generally, authentic assessment means that the process as well as the task or issue tries to be as close to "real-world" practices as possible; and there is emphasis on tasks that are pragmatic and draw upon whole intelligence - such as those that require performance of multiple activities and application of acquired knowledge. This type of

assessment is found most frequently at the elementary level. Although some provinces are developing large-scale assessments at the primary and intermediate levels based on authentic assessment, there is no evidence that indicates broad classroom practice or strong implementation by local and provincial authorities.

- In the past three years, the use of authentic assessment has become very common in schools and classrooms in **Finland** at all levels of education from preschool to university-level and including adult education. Authentic assessment, as it is defined in Finland, aims to be performance-based and true to students' lives and problems and reflect actual learning and instruction in the classroom and the out-of-school world.

- Although it is more commonly referred to as performance assessment, authentic assessment is used in **New Zealand** to provide information on national or system-wide performance, as well as in individual schools to provide information for the formative evaluation of students. As part of the National Education Monitoring Project, New Zealand administers an assessment (which has characteristics of authentic assessment) to a three percent sample of students in different subject areas on a rolling, four-year cycle. In 1997, the assessment focused on numeracy skills, social science, and library/research skills; in 1996, the assessment focused on reading/speaking and aspects of technology and music. Schools, as well, use their own authentic assessment tasks to gather information on student performance and progress.

- **Sweden** is working for authentic assessment-or *autentiska uppgifter*, as it is known in the native language-to become part of all national tests currently administered to students at multiple levels of education. Although this assessment method or theory is not fully reflected in current national tests, it is used at the school and classroom level, mostly in the assessment of social science subjects. Sweden views authentic assessment as particularly suitable for assessing student learning and for advancing stated education goals, which focus on making education accord with democratic values and on creating environments that allow for the development of creative skills, communication skills, language skills, self-efficacy, and social competence.

- The **United States** administers a low-stakes test, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), to a sample of students to gather information about national student achievement. NAEP is considered to have elements of authentic assessment in that, for instance, its stimulus materials (i.e., reading passages) are in their original form. Students in grades 4, 8, and 12 (roughly ages 9, 13, and 17) are tested in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, world geography, civics, and arts. Authentic assessment also is used at the state level (in some state assessment instruments) and the local level (in schools and classrooms), although the extent to which it is used is difficult to determine and varies widely throughout the country.

In England and France, the term authentic assessment is not used, nor is there a comparable term. However, it appears that this type of evaluation is used in their national assessments. In **England**, tests measure the progress of students against criteria for each

level of the National Curriculum. Seven, eleven, and fourteen year-olds are assessed in English, mathematics, and science, with tests that require them to sift through information and apply acquired knowledge. A minority of items seek response from a ready-made list. In **France**, items on national assessments (in mathematics, science, geographic history, and modern languages, for example) are constructed in formats corresponding to the definition of authentic assessment. For instance, in these items, students are required to respond in writing.

The term authentic assessment is not used in **Turkey**, either; however, students are assessed in what appears to be a holistic, authentic manner. Students' performance in homework, projects, and on-the-job training, as well as their involvement in extra-curricular activities, contribute to the assessment of students in terms of their development of written and oral communication skills, problem-solving skills, and conscientious citizenship.

Both the Czech Republic and Spain remarked that participation in TIMSS was the first time that authentic assessment was used in their countries. The reaction to the mathematics and science items on the TIMSS questionnaires received very favorable responses from students in the **Czech Republic**, and the ministry currently is encouraging teachers to incorporate this type of assessment into their practice. However, as the Czech Republic stated, they are at the very beginning of the process. In **Spain**, the term authentic assessment does not exist; and the comparable terms *evaluacíon de tareas* (tasks assessment) or *evaluacíon des destrezas* (skills assessment) are scarcely used in word or deed. Although some teachers use these types of assessment in their pedagogy, they are still fairly uncommon in Spain.

Finally, Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland remarked that authentic assessment does not exist-in term or in form-in their countries. In **Austria**, national assessments are norm-referenced by law; and although norm-referenced tests can and do have characteristics of authentic assessment, Austria remarked that such assessments do not exist there. In **Denmark**, there is no centralized testing and no information on practice of authentic assessment at other levels. At the Universities of Zurich and Fribourg in **Switzerland**, there is research and development work in the use of authentic assessment for mathematics and foreign languages (respectively); however, this type of assessment is not currently used in Switzerland.

How is Authentic Assessment Performed and Score?

Based on the responses of our group, there are two overriding methods in using (and scoring) authentic assessments. First, there are countries that regularly use authentic assessment in large-scale assessments: Belgium (French), Canada, France, New Zealand, and the United States. These countries emphasize the importance of having explicit guidelines for scoring each particular authentic assessment item or task, as well as having individuals trained in scoring the items. One of the benefits of authentic assessment is that students may be awarded partial scores thus giving teachers and administrators more specific information on students' performance.

For instance, some **Canadian** provinces have developed large-scale assessments at primary, junior, and intermediate levels based on concepts of authentic assessment, including lengthy cross-curricular testing periods of two to four weeks. They include opportunities for collaborative work, dialogue toward individual performance assessments, and portfolios demonstrating skill achievement. Measurement includes observation, marking

to scale, and using sets of descriptors identifying levels of quality within any single outcome.

In **France**, precise instructions are given in the scoring of assessment items, and students are allowed to receive partial scores. In **New Zealand**, senior teacher trainees, university students, and teachers are trained to score national assessment tasks in a process that involves discussing examples and checking for consistency among scores. In the **United States**, NAEP items that use authentic materials generally are scored on a six-point scale, with explicit scoring matrices provided.

Second, there are countries where authentic assessment is primarily (or also) a classroom practice. Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States (and to a very limited degree, Czech Republic and Spain) told us that authentic assessment was becoming common in classrooms across their countries. The most common way to assess students authentically in the classroom, as many described to us, is with portfolio assessment, in which students compile examples of their best work.

In particular, in **Finland** the emphasis on portfolio assessment is to discover and focus on students' strengths. Portfolios are assessed first by students, then by teachers and external scorers. Further, the criteria and standards against which portfolios are rated depend upon the purpose of the assessment. Teachers in the **United States** are more commonly using portfolio assessment, as well. In fact, the New Standards Project, a project to develop high-standards curriculum and authentic assessment methods for all students relies heavily upon the use of student portfolios.

Although **Turkey** does not describe using portfolio assessment, their assessment of students includes gathering information from grades or marks to involvement in outside activities and performance in special projects to come to an overall conclusion about students' abilities.

New Developments

In the Spring 1997 newsletter, we reported on two new assessment projects in Luxembourg. Luxembourg reports that these two projects—one on the transition from primary to secondary education and the other on vocational training—have been implemented and well received.

Improvements Planned for Newsletter Website

Visit us at
<http://www.ed.gov/NCES/inesnwa/neta.html>!

As we announced in the Spring 1997 newsletter, the Network A newsletter website is up and running! You can now access seven issues of the newsletter including this current edition—as well as updated contact information for the newsletter correspondents and Network A members. Further, we are planning some major renovations and additions to the site in time for the next edition of the newsletter. Improvements we are considering include adding links to relevant and interesting websites (e.g., TIMSS site, OECD site, national ministries' sites); a counter to tally the number of visitors to our site; and new graphic designs. We also could make important documents available for viewing or downloading, such as minutes from Network A and subgroup meetings or progress reports from other activities. Your comments as we begin the process of expansion would be much appreciated; please contact us with your suggestions.

Reminder: To view the website, you need an Internet connection and a web browser. The website is best viewed with Netscape Navigator 2.0 (or more recent) or with Microsoft Internet Explorer, although it has been designed so that is can be viewed reasonably well with other browsers or earlier versions of Netscape. Because each computer system is different, it is recommended that if you have any questions, you first contact your local technical support staff. However, we will be glad to answer your questions, technical and otherwise, as best we can.

A New Orientation Procedure for the Transition from Primary to Secondary Education

Luxembourg implemented its plan to change the procedures by which students are transitioned from primary to secondary school. Previously, students had to pass a national admissions exam at the end of primary school (age 11-12) in order to enter either secondary school (university preparatory) or technical secondary (vocational) school. The exam was administered to all students on the same day and consisted of three parts: Arithmetic, French, and German. Those students who failed the exam, about 25 percent each year, were required to attend preparatory classes for technical secondary school.

In school year 1996-97, the admissions exam was replaced by an individual orientation process which collects information about each student over the course of the entire year. The orientation process is designed to collect more meaningful information about individual students. A national commission consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Education, primary school inspectors, education experts from universities, and primary, secondary, and technical secondary school teachers developed the new framework of the program. Single elements were developed by groups of specialists.

With the orientation program, parents meet with their child's teacher regularly throughout the year to discuss assessment results, and they attend information meetings with school psychologists and teachers from different secondary schools. At the end of the school year, each student is evaluated by an Orientation Council, which consists of the primary school teacher, a secondary school teacher, a technical school teacher, and the primary school inspector. The Council uses trimestrial school reports, written opinions from the parents, performance on national assessment tests, and, sometimes, teachers' documentation of students' cognitive and social capabilities to determine whether a student attends secondary school, technical school, or preparatory classes for technical school. If the Council recommends that a student attend technical secondary school but parents wish their child attend a secondary school, the student can take the "old" admissions exam. If parents disagree with the Council's recommendation that their child attend preparatory classes before technical school, they can appeal to a commission which has the authority to overturn the decision upon review of the relevant documents.

In the orientation process's first year of implementation, the Council's recommendations met with student or parental disagreement in only 144 out of 3950 possible cases. Although the placement distribution into secondary school programs has been similar to the distribution under the old admissions exam-40 percent to secondary school, 52 percent to technical secondary school, and 8 percent to preparatory classes-the new orientation process is seen as more informative and rewarding for all parties involved.

Reform of Assessment Procedures in Technical Schools

Positive reaction also accompanied Luxembourg's use of new exam instruments to better measure students' professional competencies. The Ministry of Education's reforms in technical secondary education began in 1991, after feedback from the professional world had indicated that the vocational training of students was becoming outdated in the face of increasingly complex and technological workplaces. Between 1991-1994, new curricula were developed for 12 different subject areas, and new didactic concepts were introduced, such as having

students work independently on projects that resemble potential work situations. In 1994, the Ministry decided to undertake a new research project to develop and evaluate new examination instruments for vocational education. New instruments were designed to assess not only the students' final achievement level, but also their progress in the training program.

Typically, new exam questions place students in hypothetical professional situations in which they must execute specific assignments. For example, students may have to write a letter of complaint or negotiate with a client in a role playing scenario. They receive precise descriptions and all the materials required to complete these tasks, such as a dossier with information on the companies involved or a list of customers and suppliers. Specifications describe the students'' expected behavior and required results of their work, and provide guidelines for the use of the evaluation forms in order to standardize the assessment process.

Prior to the use of the new instruments in the final examinations, they were tested in several schools and classes to assess their objectivity, difficulty, and practicability, as well as to gauge students' and teachers' reactions to them. The testing process proved very helpful in gathering feedback for the development of the final instruments and in familiarizing students and teachers with the new exams.

New instruments were subsequently used in the final examinations for office administrators in the summer terms of 1996 and 1997 and for electricians in the summer term of 1997. Students, as well as potential future employers, reacted positively to the more practical exams. Although some teachers were concerned about the increased time required to develop the new tasks, it is expected that this will become less of a consideration as teachers have more experience with the new format.

Network Updates

Network A

Last March, Network A met in Lisbon, where it finalized the *Strategy to Produce Regular Indicators of Student Achievement*, which had been under discussion and development for several years. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Data Strategy was then finalized in May, 1997, in Budapest at an organizational meeting of Network A members and other countries considering participation in the strategy.

Two Network A subgroups also met in Budapest. The Cross-Curricular Competencies (CCC) group appointed a steering committee to develop a proposal for the implementation of its assessment project. This proposal will focus on the general commitment of the data strategy to assessing broad cross-curricular competencies and on the development of a schedule and procedure to devise and pilot instruments to be used in the measurement of self-perception. The Analysis and Presentation of Outcome Indicators (APOI) group appointed a working group to develop an analysis plan that will provide guidance to the data strategy contractor and which may inform future publications and the development of indicators. The next Network A plenary meeting will take place November 3-5 in Salzburg, Austria.

Network B

Network B met in June in Kabelvaag, Norway, where several important decisions were made regarding data collection and new projects. The Network resolved to: work on a new survey module about continuing education and training; explore the development of indicators on the private and social returns on education; and participate in the implementation of the new ISCED to Labor Force Survey and other household surveys.

Also, as Network B and EUROSTAT continue to make progress on the analysis of the differences in their program classifications, the migration of data collection from Statistics Sweden to OECD for non-EUROSTAT countries was approved. However, transfer of data collection regarding EUROSTAT countries will await the completion of the analysis and resolution of the differences in classification between the Network and EUROSTAT. Data collection for EAG 1997, which took place last February and March, involved extensions into continuing education and training for unemployed persons and assessing the quality of data.

Network C

Network C used data from TIMSS and its own survey of primary schools to produce eight new indictors that will be published in *EAG 1997*. The indicators focus on characteristics of eighth-grade mathematics teachers and of eighth-grade mathematics classrooms and on student/teacher ratio, internal management practices, and teachers' salaries in primary schools. A separate report based on the Network C survey of primary schools is now in production as an OECD publication. For another major activity, Jaap Scheerens and Gonnie van Amelsvoort produced conceptual background papers for the future development of indicators on school process and staffing.

During its meeting in The Hague in May, Network C resolved to prepare a proposal for a survey of upper secondary schools. Subsequently, the INES Steering Group approved their preliminary proposal and invited the Network to prepare a more detailed proposal for the Steering Group meeting in October. Also at the meeting in The Hague, Network C subgroups made progress in their respective activities and scheduled meetings for September in Paris. The Locus of Decision-Making group is in the process of further refining its questionnaire. And, it is expected that the Network will focus future efforts on the work being done by the Equity subgroup.

Welcome the BPC

In October, OECD welcomed the newly-formed Board of Participating Countries (BPC) to Paris for its first official meeting. The BPC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Network A's *Strategy to Produce Regular Indicators of Student Achievement*, and currently has member representatives from 24 countries. A Terms of Reference (TOR) has been issued to solicit bids to implement the strategy; and once a contractor has been selected-technical review and selection are scheduled for November and December-the process of implementation will begin. The Data Strategy, as it was commonly referred to during its development over the past four years, will conduct international assessments of the reading, mathematics, and science achievement of 15 year-old students, focusing on a different subject area in each of the Data Strategy's three-year cycles. Reading will be the core subject tested in the first cycle in 1999.

Country Highlight: France

Champs et Methodes de l'Evaluation a la Direction de l'Evaluation et de la Prospective

Par Jacqueline Levassuer

La direction de l'évaluation et de la prospective (DEP) a été créée en 1987 pour mettre en place au ministère de l'éducation nationale un outil qui contribue à mesurer "l'état de l'Ecole," à définir les politiques à mettre en oeuvre pour conduire le changement et à évaluer les résultats de ces politiques.

La mission de la DEP, en matière d'évaluatition, est donc double:

- organiser des évaluations externes du système éducatif pour en mesurer les résultats et rendre compte de son efficacité;
- développer une nouvelle culture de l'évaluation au sein du système en donnant des outils d'évaluation diagnostique et formative aux enseignants et aux équipes éducatives.

I. Pour mesurer les résultats et l'efficacité du système éducatif, la DEP a retenu quatre approches.

La première est celle de l'évaluation des compétences et des connaissances des élèves. Ces dernières sont fixées par les objectifs et les programmes d'enseignement. L'évaluation consiste à mesurer l'atteinte de ces objectifs à l'aide d'épreuves passées par un échantillon représentatif d'élèves (exemple: l'évaluation en fin de collège conduite en 1984, 1990, et 1995). Pour élargir cette approche, la DEP s'est aussi engager dans des comparaisons internationales, bilatérales ou multilatérales (exemples: maîtrise du français en fin de collège avec d'autres pays francophones - 1993 - ou de l'anglais avec l'Espagne et la Suède - en cours): ces comparaisons permettent de replacer les résultats obtenus par les élèves français dans un cadre qui dépasse le contexte national. De même, la DEP intègre dans ses travaux une dimension longitudinale qui vise à mesurer l'évolution dans le temps des compétences et des connaissances des élèves (exemples: "connaissances en français et en calcul des élèves des années 20 et d'aujord'hui à partir d'épreuves du certificat d'études primaire" ou "évolution des compétences scolaires des meilleurs élèves depuis 40 ans").

La deuxième approche est l'évaluation des politiques éducatives mise en place pour améliorer les conditions d'enseignement et aider les élèves en difficultés. L'objectif de ces évaluations est de décrire les dispositifs mis en oeuvre sur le terrain, de recueilli l'opinion des acteurs, de mesurer l'impact des politiques sur les acquis des élèves (exemple: les effets des aménagements du rythmes de vie de l'enfant, la semaine de 4 jours de classe - 1993 – l'expérimentation de la nouvelle 6e, première de collège).

La troisième approche concerne l'évaluation des acteurs du système. Le champ principal est la description des pratiques pédagogiques des enseignants et la mesure de l'impact de ces pratiques sur les acquis des élèves. Un autre champ concerne l'action des agents du fonctionnement du système (par exemple, les Inspecteurs, les documentalistes, les conseillers d'éducation, les conseillers d'orientation-psychologues).

La quatrième approche est celle de l'évaluation des structures d'enseignement, c'est à dire de la recherche de l'influence que peuvent avoir l'organisation des établissements d'enseignement et les interactions entre les acteurs au sein de ces derniers sur les apprentissages, les acquisitions et donce la réussite des élèves. Le concept de valeur ajoutée des établissements soustend

l'ensemble des travaux conduits dans ce champ.

Les travaux d'évaluation conduits par la DEP reposent sur trois principes:

1. *Une démarche clairement participative*. Les épreuves de mesure des compétences des élèves et les questionnaires d'enquête sont élaborés par des groupes de travail associant des représentants des directions concernées du ministères, de l'inspection, des enseignants, et des acteurs de terrain; les données recueillies sont ensuite analysées avec l'aide de ces groupes de travail.
2. *Une démarche centrée sur une approche quantitative et qualitative*. Les études sont conduites sur des échantillons représentatifs et utilisent des méthodes d'analyse statistiques pour le traitement des données. L'élaboration des tests et des questionnaires repose sur une analyse préalable fine des programmes, des objectifs d'enseignement, du discours des acteurs et des observations existantes sur le sujet.
3. *Une démarche transparente pour restituer les résultats*. Les résultats des travaux, ainsi que les instruments de recueil de données et les méthodes d'analyse utilisés sont quasi-systématiquement publiés, ce qui garantit la transperence et permet de faciliter l'appropriation des outils et des méthodes par les utilisateurs potentiels.

II. Pour développer une culture d'évaluation au sein du système éducatif, la DEP a entrepris de diffuser des outils d'évaluation pour le pilotage du système éducatif.

La DEP se place ainsi dans une logique d'offre d'outils qui marque une forte évolution du rôle de l'administration centrale.

Des outils d'évaluation diagnostique et formative

L'évaluation, telle que la pratiquent quotidiennement les enseignants, est avant tout une évaluation-notation des savoirs et des savoir-faire avoir qui vise à vérifier si ce que l'élève est supposé appris est acquis. Pour que l'évaluation devienne un outil pédagogique et qu'elle aide donc à faire progresser les élèves, il faut qu'elle s'inscrive dans un processus d'apprentissage.

C'est pour cette raison que le ministère de l'éducation nationale a introduit en 1989 à l'entrée du CE2 (milieu de l'ecole élémentaire) et de la 6e (début du collège), et en 1992 en seconde (l'entrée du lycée) une évaluation obligatoire des compétences des élèves. Ces évaluations annuelles, qui se placent à trois moments clés du parcours scolaire, ont pour objectif d'aider les enseignants à prendre la mesure des réussites et des lacunes et des difficultés de leurs élèves et à définir des pistes pour y remédier.

Elles ont permis aussi, par leur caractère systématique, de sensibiliser l'ensemble des enseignants à l'utilisation d'outils d'évaluation diagnostique.

Pour pallier le caractère ponctuel de ces évaluations, la DEP s'est engagée parallèlement dans une démarche visant à mettre à disposition des enseignants des outils d'évaluation qu'ils puissent utiliser quand ils le souhaitent. Ces outils, à terme, consitueront une véritable banque d'items d'évaluation dans les différentes disciplines pour l'école primaire, pour le collège, et la première année du lycée.

Des indicateurs pour le pilotage des établissements du second degré (IPES)

Ces indicateurs mis à disposition des établissements scolaires doivent permettre au chef d'établissement de rendre compte de la situation de son collège ou de son lycée et de

son évolution à son conseil d'administration et plus largement à ses différents partenaires (collectivités locales - autorités academiques. Grâce à ces indicateurs (IPES), construits à partir des données existant dans les systèmes d'information, chacque établissement est à même de prendre la mesure et, à partir de ce constat, de construire un projet pour favoriser la réussite et l'épanouissement personnel de ses élèves.

NOTE: Please contact us if you would like to receive an English translation of the preceding article.

Current Assessment Activities

Many assessment activities are being conducted between July and December of this year. Individual country activitites are described below and summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Current Assessment Activities

Assessment Activities	Countries
Test construction, development, and revision	Canada, Czech Republic, England, France, and New Zealand
Coordination, preparation, and consensus building	Canada and France
Piloting	Czech Republic and England
Data collection	France and Spain
Scoring and analyzing	Czech Republic, England, France, Spain, and the United States
Reporting results	Canada, England, France, New Zealand, and the United States

Test construction, development, and revision activities are taking place in the following countries:

- **Canada** will discuss and approve revisions to the SAIP Reading and Writing assessment;
- The **Czech Republic** is developing a new standardized leaving exam from secondary schools to be administered and scored by a centralized, external group;
- **England** is developing National Curriculum test items to be used in 1998;
- **France** has set up work groups to develop evaluation tools and protocols for the structuring and coding of 1998 assessments; and
- **New Zealand** will conduct planning and task development for the 1998 assessment tasks.

The following countries are engaging in coordination, preparation, and consensus building activities:

- **Canada** will build consensus for the SAIP Mathematics assessment at three National Expectations-setting Sessions during September and October; and
- **France** is coordinating the administration of 1998 assessments through printing and dissemination of materials to schools.

Piloting activities are being conducted as follows:

- The **Czech Republic** will be piloting test items throughout the Fall for the IEA Civics study; and
- **England** is trialing National Curriculum tests to be used in 1998.

The following data collection activities are transpiring:

- **France** is collecting student sample results for the calculation of national results references; and

- **Spain** is collecting data for surveys on families and teachers at the low secondary level.

Scoring and analyzing procedures are being carried out in the following countries:

- The **Czech Republic** is currently analyzing the results of the pilot tests for the first version of its new standardized leaving exam from secondary school;
- **England** is scoring the results from 1997 National Curriculum assessments and will subsequently analyze the results;
- **France** is scoring and analyzing an evaluation of the CM2 (5th year of primary school) reading level; an evaluation of handicaps of students with reading difficulties entering junior high; and an assessment of the 3rd year (end of junior high) plastic art class;
- **Spain** is analyzing the results of a survey of teachers on curriculum and a survey on the organization and functioning of secondary schools; and
- The **United States** is scoring and analyzing the results of its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests.

The following countries are involved with reporting activities:

- **Canada** will complete a SAIP science technical report;
- **England** will report the results of the 1997 National Curriculum assessments;
- **France** will complete reports on the French results of TIMSS population 2 (fourth-graders); an evaluation of German, English, and French oral competencies of students in the 2nde class; and an evaluation comparing the knowledge and abilities in English of 15-16 year-old students in France, Spain, and Sweden;
- **New Zealand** is distributing the results of the 1997 national assessments;
- **Spain** is producing a preliminary report on pupils' achievement in mathematics, science, geography, history, and language at the lower secondary level and a final report on the organization and functioning of secondary schools; and
- The **United States** will report on results from selected NAEP tests.

Addendum

There are two points of clarification we would like to make from the Spring 1997 newsletter. First, regarding **New Zealand's** use of high-stakes tests (see Issue 6, Table 1), apart from decisions about subjects to study in the final two years of high school (years 12 and 13) which are partly influenced by the results of a national assessment administered in the middle of high school (year 11), national tests do not influence course selection for New Zealand students at the secondary or tertiary level.

Second, we would like to add a few, important points concerning the Country Highlight on **Austria** (see Issue 6).

- Local councils, in addition to national and provincial authorities, have a major role in primary education in that they own their local schools and finance the non-teaching staff (page 9).
- About one-third of Austria's students take the matriculation exam at the end of secondary schooling for entrance to

university-level education. Students in non-university technical programs take a different examination, but one which is guided by similar principles.

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